WORLD CONGREGATIONALISM

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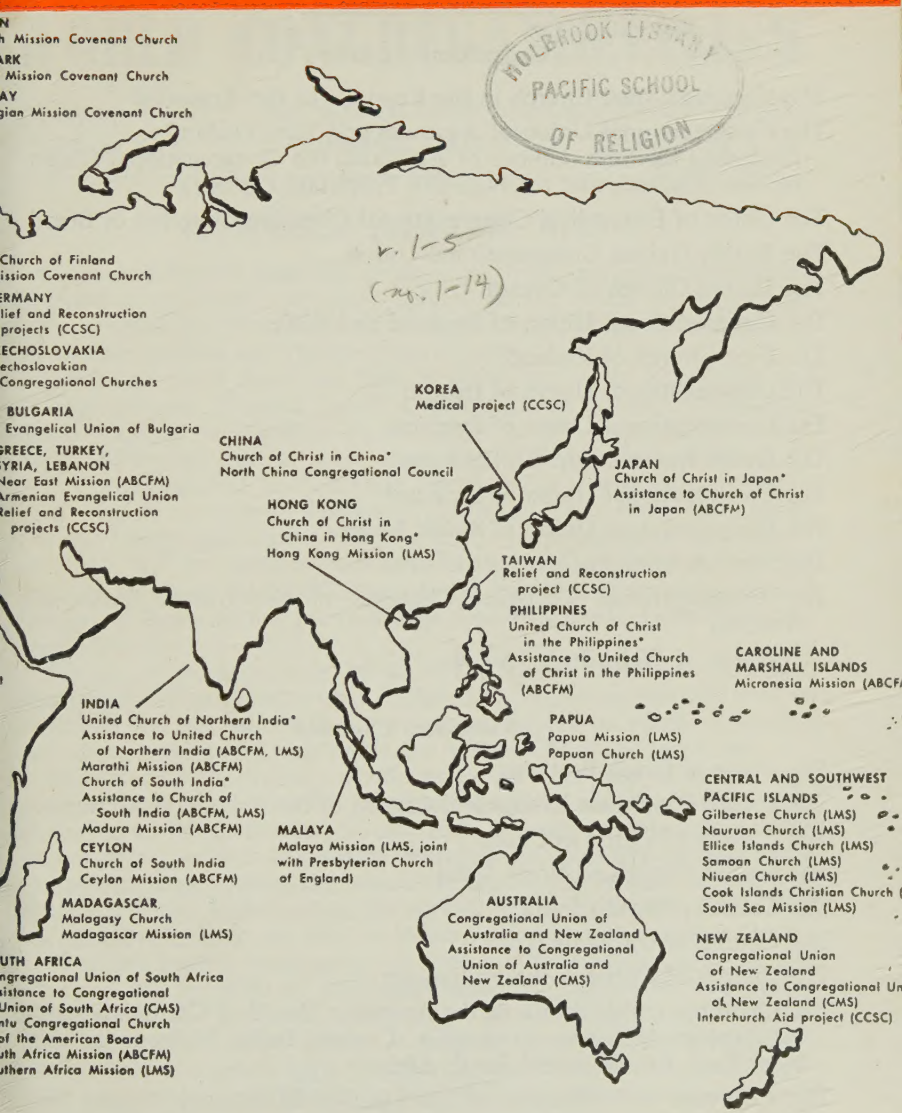

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INTERNATIONAL CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL
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THE INTERNATIONAL CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL

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Constituent Members

The Congregational Church in the Republic of the Argentine

The Congregational Union of Australia and New Zealand (including the State Unions of Australia, the Congregational Union of New Zealand, and the Nauruan Protestant Church)

The Union of Evangelical Congregational Christian Churches of Brazil

The British Guiana Congregational Union

The United Church of Canada

The Congregational Union of England and Wales

The Free Church of Finland

The Congregational Union of Ireland

The Congregational Union of Jamaica

The Dutch Remonstrant Brotherhood

The Congregational Union of Scotland

The Congregational Union of South Africa

The Swedish Mission Covenant Church

The Congregational Christian Churches of the United States of America

The Union of Welsh Independents

Associated Churches

The Unity of Czech Brethren

The United Protestant Evangelical Church of the Palatinate, Germany

The Church of Christ in China

The United Church of North India

The Church of South India

The Church of Christ in Japan

The Church of Christ in the Philippines

The Churches and Missions of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions—in Angola, Ceylon, India, Micronesia, the Near East, Rhodesia and South Africa.

The Churches and Missions of the London Missionary Society—in Hongkong, India, Madagascar, Malaya, Papua, Rhodesia, Southern Africa and the South Seas.

JANUARY 1959 No. 1

WORLD CONGREGATIONALISM

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A WORD ALLOW ME

Commendation is generally given to any who can make two blades of grass grow where one grew before. In the world of periodicals perhaps there may be a little word of praise for those who manage to reverse the process and reduce three to one.

For some years there has been a gratifying world circulation for "Congregational Women" and "Congregational Youth", occasional mimeographed productions at the hand of my colleague, Dorothy Biggs. Two years ago we were encouraged to begin the production of the "Congregational News Service", designed to supply information in brief about our world fellowship. Now in their place we present "World Congregationalism", in the hope that it will serve the ends of all three. But we entertain also the larger hope which prompted the decision taken at our Eighth Assembly in Hartford to make this one of the five projects of the International Congregational Council for the immediate future.

We are a comparatively small and scattered family of churches. Meeting is difficult except for a happy few. But strong ties still bind us together, and we believe that we have something to which to witness as well as much to receive within the Whole Church of our Lord.

This inadequate medium is offered in the hope that it will at least provide news of one another, and perhaps some insight into the work and witness, the problems and solutions, the experiments and growing points of our various and varied churches. Its necessary limitations do not at this stage present the possibility that it may become a forum of theological and ecclesiastical discussion, valuable though that would be. But it will, we trust, help us to get to know one another.

This first issue is being given as wide a circulation as possible. For this and the promise of continued financial support we are deeply grateful to the National Fellowship of Congregational Christian Women in the United States. If you are interested to continue to receive will you please turn to page 28. And we are sure that there is high commendation for any who can make two subscribers where only one grew before.

Ralph F. G. Calder

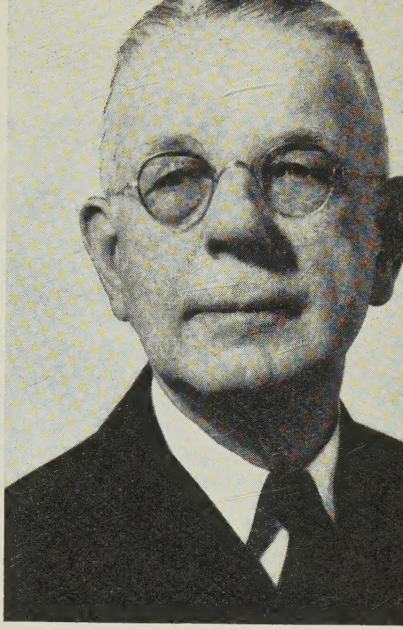
RUSSELL HENRY STAFFORD

Dr. Fred Field Goodsell

"The most signal influence upon my youth, after that of my home itself, was my association with my mother's father, John Russell of Michigan, the founder of the National Prohibition Party, who died in the year of my graduation from College at the age of ninety, and after seventy-one years of effective service as a minister of the gospel. To my grandfather's generous and patient willingness to discuss with me, from my early childhood, great problems of faith and morals in the full light of his clear intellect and wide experience, I doubtless owe the interest which I felt increasingly, from the dawn of capacity to reason, in the subject matter of religion and the purpose which was mine as far back as I can remember to enter the Christian ministry. This purpose never wavered, save in the years of doubt and readjustment, when I feared that my changing views could not be accommodated to the requirements of the Church. But fortunately I discovered that these changes were harmonious with the developing position of Evangelical Protestantism itself, so that I was enabled with a clear conscience and with complete intellectual honesty, to proceed under divine guidance, to the accomplishment of the aim so long cherished."

Leaving the Wisconsin home where he was born in 1890, Russell Henry Stafford trained for this ministry in the University of Minnesota, New York University and Drew Theological Seminary, and after two small pastorates in Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1915 to 1922, he entered upon the major experience of his career at the Pilgrim Congregational Church, St. Louis, Missouri, 1922-27, and at historic Old South Church, Boston, Massachusetts, 1927-45. His ministry all through these years, and since, has been Christ-centred. "Christian faith is grounded in personal loyalty rather than in abstract logic. Its cardinal principle is devotion to our Lord Jesus Christ." So he preached in his first sermon at Old South Church. He has consistently pointed to Christ as the Way, the Truth and the Life, and he has refused to tolerate interpretations of the Christian faith which insult the intelligence of sincere seekers for truth.

Old South was loath to release Dr. Stafford and he was loath to leave, but he felt the call to be President of Hartford Seminary Foundation as a "summons of duty to invest my remaining years of life in a type of service to God and the Church even more challenging than the parish ministry." He was inaugurated President in January, 1946, and served to June, 1958. He regarded his function as President not primarily to teach but to inspire teachers and students to and provide the means and surroundings whereby they could do their best work. During his



presidency notable elements of strength were added to the Foundation. "The Institute of Social Service" was added in 1950 as a fourth "School". The Kennedy School of Missions was provided with a suitable home. The Foundation was continued as one of the foremost centres of scholarly and practical training for all types of Christian service at home and abroad.

In 1940 Dr. Stafford accepted election as President of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. For a decade he gave inspiring leadership to that body, including fellow churchmen immediately responsible for its direction, staff members and hundreds of missionaries, men and women, in many parts of the world. He was an ideal presiding officer at annual meetings, a wise counsellor in administrative sessions, an irresistible source of good cheer and dauntless faith in the validity of the world mission of the Church. His ecumenical outlook was a built-in part of his nature and training.

For felicitous remarks appropriate to the occasion, whatever it may be, Dr. Stafford is without peer. As a preacher of the Word, he combines with humility the courage of deep convictions, the grace of beautiful language and incisiveness and clarity of logical thought. His total ministry has been distinguished by great capacity for understanding friendship, by ecumenicity of spirit, and by conscientious fulfilment of his calling. He will bring to the moderatorship of the International Congregational Council great gifts of the Spirit and the overflowing enthusiasm of a real Christian.

Dr. Russell Henry Stafford was elected Moderator of the International Congregational Council at the Assembly in Hartford in July, 1958. *He had served as Assistant Moderator from* 1953 *to the Rev. Dr S. Maurice Watts whom he now succeeds. He will be Moderator until the next Assembly in* 1964. *He is presently acting as pastor to Park Congregational Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan.*

Dr Fred Field Goodsell was Executive Vice-President of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, 1930-49, *following twenty-five years of missionary service in Turkey.*

THE MISSION COVENANT CHURCH OF SWEDEN

(Svenska Missionsförbundet)

Gösta Hedberg

Beginnings

Early in the nineteenth century a great "folk-revival" affected practically the whole of Sweden. Quite a long time passed before this resulted in the formation of Churches. A Swedish Baptist Society began to grow in the middle of the century, and a Methodist Church was organized some ten years later. The great majority of the converts, however, remained within the State Church, though groups of believers started to join missionary associations, and in particular the National Evangelical Missionary Society, a revival movement within the State Church, which was organized in 1856.

Two issues, hotly debated in the middle of the second half of the century, finally led to the formation of the Mission Covenant Church. The first was the regulation that all citizens must take communion at least once a year in the State Church. Those to whom faith had become personal through conversion strongly objected, and groups of believers began to meet for their own communion services in which a lay preacher of the revival movement would administer the sacrament.

There was also strong disagreement with the State Church's official view that in Christ's death God is reconciled—the teaching of Anselm of Canterbury. One of the revival's foremost personalities, Dr. Paul Peter Waldenström, earlier a minister in the State Church, began powerfully and skillfully to protest that the New Testament proclaimed that God in Christ was reconciling us with himself.

These two issues and a new understanding of the nature of the Church as revealed in the New Testament made the majority of the revival people feel themselves strangers in the State Church. In 1877 and 1878 two conferences were held in Stockholm and at the latter the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden was formed.

Constitution and Organization

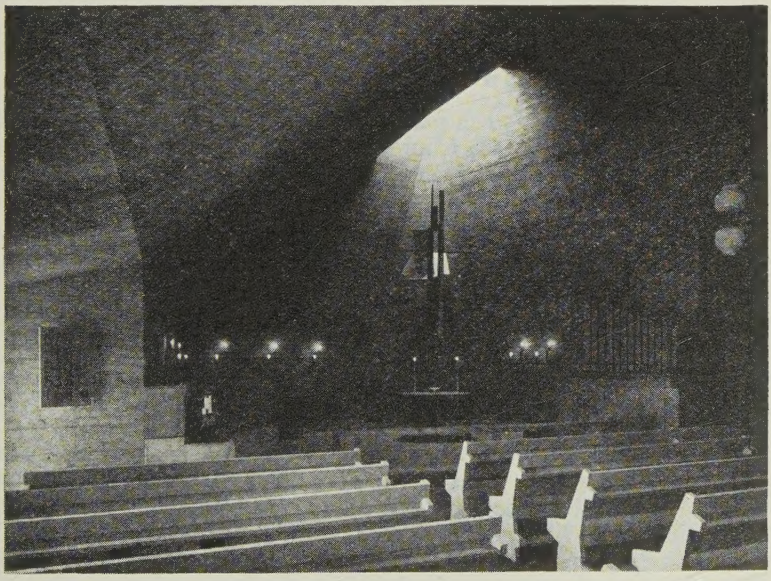
The constitution of the Mission Covenant Church has been from the beginning clearly congregational. Its object is to unite local congregations for common work in Home and Foreign Missions. It has no doctrine which can be summed up in a confession. Membership is open to anyone who confesses faith in Jesus Christ. The Scriptures are the only basis for doctrine and preaching. Every member is free to interpret

the Scriptures and to formulate his own faith. Both infant and believer's baptism are practised.

The Mission Covenant Church is governed by a General Assembly consisting of representatives of the local churches. Each local church is free to comply with the decisions of Assembly or not. To-day, however, there is emphasis not only on freedom and independence but also on the fellowship and obligation for the Church's common responsibilities involved in "congratio".

The General Assembly appoints a Board and departmental boards and committees with a full time staff of seventy. The leader of the Church is the General Secretary, the Rev. Gösta Nicklasson. Under him there are three departmental secretaries and their co-workers, serving the Home Missions Department, the Foreign Missions Department, and the Finance Department, with two Publishing Houses. (The Church publishes a weekly and much other material.)

Home Missions cover a field of 16 districts, each with its own Moderator. There are 1,587 congregations with a membership of 98,000, and 664 full-time ministers. The ministers get their training at the Covenant Theological Seminary at Lidingö, near Stockholm, though some study theology at Lund and Uppsala.



VÄSTERORT CHURCH, VÄLLINGBY

Home Missions also include the extensive youth work concentrated in an organization called Svenska Missionsförbundets Ungdom (S.M.U.). This comprises about 66,000 young people in three divisions: Girl and Boy Scouts (10-14); Juniors (14-17); Seniors (above 17); the transition being automatic. Church membership follows personal faith in Christ.

The Educational Department of Home Missions serves the Sunday Schools (about 100,000 children); provides teaching guidance and material; is responsible for aiding the confirmation classes.

There is a special committee for social studies and for the social action of the Church. A full-time secretary (who is also an M.P.) has done much for refugees and prisoners of war. A full-time minister is engaged in special "counselling" and in the training of ministers in the "cure of souls".

Foreign Missions are carried on in Africa and Asia. Work was begun in Belgian Congo in 1881 and in French Equatorial Africa in 1909, and these fields now show 80,000 communicants. Work in Central China and Turkestan had to be abandoned for political reasons. In their stead a mission to Muslims was begun in Bombay in 1940, and in Okayama, Japan, in 1949. Altogether the Church has 251 missionaries and 1,332 native workers.

The Churches in Sweden Today

Children born to Swedish parents become at the same time citizens and members of the State Church (Evangelical Lutheran). The only exceptions are those both of whose parents in writing request secession from the State Church for themselves and their children.

Beside the State Church and partly within her framework there are several Free Churches and Free Christian Movements which have in common that their members are confessing Christians. The largest of these is the Mission Covenant Church. There are five Baptist groups with a combined membership of 140,000. There is also a Methodist Church with about 11,000 members. The Salvation Army has some 38,000 members. Three Revival Movements claim upwards of 35,000. Thus about a quarter of a million Free Church members are to be found in a total population of seven million. An investigation has shown that 10% of the population have regular contact with the Free Churches, whereas only another 10% regularly attend the State Churches. Though 80% are indifferent the part played by the Free Churches is significant. From January 1, 1952, the Free Churches have been recognized before the law as communions of faith, and their ministers have legal rights.

Social and Cultural Influence

The Mission Covenant Church has been actively concerned in social questions and in the political life of Sweden. At present there are 24 Members of Parliament who belong to the Church. Its influence and goodwill are out of proportion to its size. It is interested also in present day questions of culture, and it is noteworthy that the leaders in cultural and education matters in Stockholm and Gothenburg belong to the Mission Covenant Church.

The Nature and Calling of the Church

Much consideration is being given today to the nature and calling of the Mission Covenant Church in Sweden and within the ecumenical fellowship. There is a conviction that the Church is rightly founded in the New Testament in bearing witness to personal faith in the Lord Jesus, and in God as Father of all and of all life. The Mission Covenant Church is also determined unassumingly but courageously to take its part in the world-wide fellowship and responsibility common to the whole Christian Church. As a step in that direction it takes pleasure in its newly gained membership of the International Congregational Council.

The Rev. Gösta Hedberg is minister of the Västerort Church, in the Vällingby suburb of Stockholm. As recently as 1951 *this district was just a small hamlet. Today Vällingby is a thriving township with over* 25,000 *people living in blocks of flats round a "centrum" of shops, public buildings, parking places in the most modern styles of architecture and town planning. Experts come from all over the world to see Vällingby.*

When the Swedish Mission Covenant Church decided to build here it was obvious that it could not set up a traditional edifice. The architects tried, therefore, to create a building intimately harmonious with the architecture of Vällingby. The interior seeks to provide a sense of intimacy, and yet also of spaciousness by means of a great flood of light which strikes down from above on the chancel. Focal point here is an almost startlingly modern presentation of the cross, pierced also to represent the eye of a needle, symbolic of the exacting nature of the Christian way. (Photo: Sune Sundahl)

WOMEN IN THE FREE CHURCH

Mildred Horton

A recent issue of the *Saturday Review of Literature* includes the following comment in a review of a book by Marya Mannes.

> ". . . . . Her only irritating trait is her defence of women against the misrepresentation of men. This is a trait many an intelligent woman indulges, despite the fact that most men think of women as people. It is a perplexing trait, perhaps because it is so self-conscious. . . . . most men have nothing against women. Some even think of every last one of them as just so much delicious French pastry."

Fortunately for Congregationalists the defence of women against the misrepresentation of men need not occupy the attention of intelligent or unintelligent women. In theory women are included as full partners in the Christian enterprise.

There are no sex barriers to ordination to the "full ministry". Church by-laws do not forbid the appointment of women to official boards. In America there is an unwritten but powerful understanding that Boards and Agencies of the churches should be constituted one third clergy, one third lay men and one third lay women.

To be sure there are individuals, men and women, who may think of women as "just so much delicious French pastry", over-sweet, soft, adding too much flabby weight, but for each of them there are many more Congregationalists who in principle believe that women are people with all the individual idiosyncrasies of any people anywhere.

So much for principle. Practice conforms a little less patly to our Christian conviction, not, I submit, because of anyone's intent but because of certain social patterns from which we all find it difficult to escape. These patterns are not limited to Christendom.

A traveller returned recently from Israel where he had visited the Kibbutzim, the famous cooperative agricultural communities. Originally the men and women there intended to share jobs side by side without regard to sex. We were told that some of the women are currently a bit dissatisfied since in the economy of the community they had been found physically inadequate for the heavy, outdoor jobs and had been retained on less inviting laundry and kitchen jobs.

Churches do not ordinarily require manual labour so ponderous that it serves as a basis for sex discrimination, but facility in church work does

depend to a large degree on experience in the non-church society of which church members are a part.

Because I know them best I must draw illustrations from American churches. I suspect the principle holds good for other nations. Here, the simplest thing to do is to maintain in the churches the kind of relationship which exists outside. While American churches enjoy the occasional dinner prepared and served by the Men's Club, it is an event delightful to everybody concerned partly because of its unusual nature. Usually, the church suppers are prepared by the women. Why? Because they have the know-how and years of experience behind them.

Trustees are usually men. Why? Because there are many more men than women who have experience handling other people's money, accounting for it according to recognized legal procedure. Fewer women than men supervise building construction outside the church and therefore they serve less frequently on Church Building Committees. And so it goes.

Accepted attitudes are as influential as past experience in allocating men and women to church work. American men coming into a church would be embarassed to be ushered to a seat by a woman because it is considered rude in America for a gentleman to be seated while a lady is standing beside him. We are used to it in theatres or restaurants, but not among friends. So men usher in churches and women don't. A curious convention but a reflection of local customs with which the church reckons.

The development of women's organizations in American churches is much like women's organizations outside the church. Women wanted to express their concern and were stopped by custom from working through existing channels. Rather than "fight for rights" women, serene in the conviction of God's concern for them, simply set themselves up in business to do on their own what was much easier to manage in a women's society than it was to accomplish through existing ecclesiastical machinery.

Women could meet at times not possible for men. They enjoyed contact with each other and liked to administer their own affairs. They didn't "feel silly" when they spoke before other women but they wondered how this new activity would look to men who were unaccustomed to sharing platforms with women.

Once the Women's Society, Guild, Fellowship, Ladies Aid, or whatever it was called, came into existence and strength, it offered an opportunity for women to serve the church through its programme. Naturally, but unfortunately, the women's organization ran the risk of becoming an end in itself. I suppose every local church has had

members to whom the women's work took precedence over any other phase of church life.

Also naturally, and unfortunately, there grew up in many places the notion that when women want to participate in church work the only place for them is in the society established by and for women. However, some women are the wrong age for the particular group in charge of the women's programme. Some are far more interested in children's work than in women's work. Some want to put their musical gifts at the service of the church. As women move increasingly into out-of-the-home employment they are increasingly interested in concerns of business men rather than those of housekeepers. They may prefer to express their interest in the church through channels not familiar to the traditional women's society.

Periodically people criticize women's societies because they do not command the active participation of business women, young women, college students, leaders in civic enterprises or some other group. In our American vernacular this criticism calls for the question, "So what?" The important problem is to put all these groups and men and women of every age and occupation into places within the church where each can carry his full share of responsibility for the life and work of his church in its totality.

Any women's society which equates itself with the church is minimizing the scope of the church which is unique among modern social institutions. What other organization includes within its membership men, women, children of very race and nationality, rich and poor, bright and stupid, sophisticated and naive, rural and urban, representatives of every kind of occupation, conservative and radical? This amazing Christian church in its various branches relates each member to every other member through each one's relationship to Christ. To say of any age or sex group that its members are limited arbitrarily to any particular part of the church is to deny the wholeness of the church and to break it up to match secular divisions, whereas its organizational glory is its ability to include all the elements which are segregated in ordinary human relationships.

To me it makes excellent sense to provide for every age and sex and occupational unit a place where an individual member can find opportunities to strengthen his church. These should never, however, be limiting places, prison houses into which people are shut away from the ongoing life of the whole community. Whatever goes on in any of these separate organizations for men or women or young people or children should point its particular membership group always away from themselves and out to their fellow churchmen and beyond to the non-church world where the Christ they serve is so deeply needed.

Shame on the Women's Society to whom the financial success of the bazaar is the end-all-and-be-all of the fall effort. Shame on the Society which lets itself become a pleasant club for its own members without trying within its own life to represent the inclusive life of the church of which it is part.

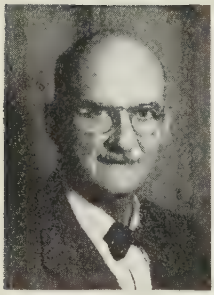
A very distinguished church in one of our American cities—not Congregational in character—has a fine programme for young people who must have letters of recommendation and pay dues for the privilege of belonging to the church club. One of its adult sponsors exhibited its club rooms with the remark that it was splendid to have a place where young people could know that they would meet only "nice" young people. It was nice, but one Congregationalist wondered whether it was quite worthy of the church of Jesus Christ. Perhaps it was more worthy than the less explicit exclusiveness of a clique which lets itself dominate the society or a "circle" which wants only agreeable like-minded friends to belong, or a congregation which has no welcome for people "across the tracks" or with the wrong colour of skin.

The World Council of Churches has a standing commission on the Cooperation of Men and Women. It studies Biblical, historical, sociological, theological, logical and illogical grounds for relating men and women. It poses questions which for better or worse Congregationalists have long-since answered to our satisfaction. But it does not behove us to be smug in our assurance that women are free to make their contribution any way the Spirit moves them. As we observe the number of men and women in our churches who do next to nothing to strengthen the life of the church, the number who are unaware of and unconcerned with the ecumenical interests of their church, we will do well to keep ourselves reminded that until men and women accept responsibility commensurate with their powers, they will not provide the kind of cooperation which is essential to the well-being of Christ's church.

When women in churches like ours accept the responsibility we are free to accept, they will contribute to the solution of the problems of relationships between men and women in other churches where women are not now free to move into areas of responsibility except those explicitly defined for women only.

Mildred Horton is the wife of Dr Douglas Horton, Dean of Harvard Divinity School. Previous to her marriage as Miss Mildred McAfee she was President of Wellesley College, Mass. She is a member of the Prudential Committee of the American Board, and as well as her many activities in the life and work of the Church has rendered great service in public and political affairs.

DR. FREDERICK L. FAGLEY



Had his death on August 25th last not of necessity cast this in the form of an obituary, it would have been most fitting that this first issue of "World Congregationalism" should carry some tribute to the Rev. Dr. Fred Fagley. He will long be remembered in the United States—as associate secretary (later *emeritus*) of the National and then the General Council of the Congregational Christian Churches; as founder and secretary of the Congregational Christian Historical Society; as co-author with the late Gaius Glenn Atkins of "The History of American Congregationalism"; as prime mover of *The Fellowship of Prayer;* as editor to his death of *Daily Devotions;* as a church politician of a very high order; and by very many as *pastor pastorum*, warm friend and shrewd judge of men.

"The key to Dad," his son Richard has written, "was his boundless concern for people. He grasped and practised the proposition that the most important resource in the world, next to faith in God, was his fellow men. Behind the impersonal complexities of modern life he always saw the person, with his needs, frailties, and capacities for growth. Abstract problems held little appeal for him. His ministry was first and last a ministry to people. It was his ability to apply the pastoral approach to organizational work that contributed his fundamental contribution to the life of our churches. Long before the term 'minister' was applied to secretarial posts he was practising the concept, and helping to humanize our denominational procedures. Even during his vacations each morning while the dew was on the ground he would write some fifteen or twenty letters in his partly legible green script—counselling pastors on their personal problems, helping churches to find parsons and parsons find churches."

But we would like also to remember him for his important service to the International Congregational Council. He acted as secretary to the committee which made the arrangements in the United States for the meeting of the Council which was held at Wellesley in 1949. It was at this meeting that the Council was given organisation, and in the naming of its first officers Dr. Fagley was unanimously selected as Treasurer. He guarded the financial interests of the Council with personal concern and carried it through difficult times successfully to the end of his period of office in 1953. With gratitude we place his name on our Roll of Founding Fathers with that of his friend in many interests, the late Dr. Albert Peel.

AN IMPRESSION OF HARTFORD

Charles E. Surman

An over-all impression is that this was an admirable Assembly, with interest not merely sustained to the end but cumulatively enriching. Those best qualified to judge from familiarity with many other international gatherings of similar nature were agreed that the addresses and discussions were outstandingly good and the *esprit* really remarkable. It can be confidently asserted that the text of the addresses will amply repay close study.

Those who looked for some flame of transcendent revelation as "God speaks to our World" may be disappointed. But there was complete certainty that God does speak to us, and the Word is, with ever new significance and force, the Word given from the beginning of the Christian dispensation. It is a Word of challenge and of searching but at the same time of enheartenment, reiterated clearly through the testimony of men and women from all parts of the earth to what He is saying in their ears and doing before their eyes. There was an impressive unity of emphasis in these uncoordinated utterances, as well as an inescapable call to more effective unity in action.

This was Congregationalism at its best—divorced, for example, from too much business. It was truly a "correspondence held among the Churches for counsel and mutual edification," as the *Savoy Declaration* envisioned meetings of the Messengers of the Churches in 1658.

There was no morbid introspection, no analytical examination of past weaknesses or failings, no painfully laboured reports on what has been done, but an alert listening for the Voice of God which insists (as Howard Stanley rightly interpreted it in his concluding sermon), "Speak to the children of Israel that they go forward".

The real significance of our Churches and the urgency of the Christian message for the world of today and of the Congregational witness within the developing and inevitable ecumenical framework was more than highlighted and stressed: it was felt as the burden of the Lord. We dispersed, warmed in heart, stretched in mind, uplifted in spirit, and at the same time disquieted and challenged by the Word which "God Speaks to our World", and without doubt that the proclamation of that Word is still committed to a committed people.

The Rev. Charles E. Surman, minister in Birmingham, England, is a leading research historian of English Congregationalism. These paragraphs are abstracted from the last issue of "Congregational Quarterly".

FIVE PROJECTS FOR WORLD CONGREGATIONALISM

At the Eighth Assembly of the International Congregational Council at Hartford it was decided that for the next five years there should be a concentration of interest on five projects.

1. A magazine of World Congregationalism to introduce us to one another; to provide news and information of the churches; to make known experiments in work and witness; to present problems common to our churches, individually and corporately, and possible solutions.

2. The planning, encouragement and furtherance of exchanges and visits of the widest possible range—pastoral, technical, administrative and academic—between our churches and associations, that the wealth of our experience may be shared.

3. The provision of grants to assist with the transport and like needs of Congregational students and others on approved assignments, and to encourage study and research.

4. The further extension of the programme of group visits from one country to another, on the basis of the very successful arrangements made during recent years.

5. The holding of special study conferences, commissions and the like, for the clarification of our witness and for the general benefit of our churches; and fuller participation in international and ecumenical discussion.

These projects cannot be carried through on the present budget of the Council which is designed to meet administrative costs only. It was, therefore, agreed at Hartford that the gifts of interested individuals and churches should be sought. Many generous promises were immediately made—including one for five years from the National Fellowship of Congregational Christian Women in the United States for the magazine. The minimum requirement over the next five years will be $10,000 or £4,000.

Will you please help forward these plans by your own gift or by interesting your church to make an annual allocation to the support of the project fund? All gifts should be sent to

> The Treasurer, The International Congregational Council, 110 Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, England, or to Dr. Arthur S. Wheelock, 405 Tulane Circle, Avon Park, Florida, U.S.A. (until April, 1959); 48 Bay View Circle, Osterville, Mass., U.S.A. (from April).

PLEASANT ISLAND

Norman H. F. Cocks

It is a far cry from Farringdon Street, or Fourth Avenue, even from Sydney or San Francisco, to wind-swept Nauru Island in the Central Pacific, 25 miles south of the equator. Even the name is quite unfamiliar to most of us. Yet Nauru is of signal importance to the economy of Australia, New Zealand and Great Britain, for this island exports each year about 1½ million tons of the world's highest grade phosphate for the nourishment of our soil and the production of our harvests. To Congregational Christians round the world Nauru has become a place of real interest and concern, for her people are the newest members of our Congregational family. On May 22nd, 1958, the Nauruan Protestant Church Council was received into full membership of the Congregational Union of Australia and New Zealand. The ceremony took place during the Assembly of this Union held at Sydney, Australia. Five delegates from Nauru, representing every phase of the Church Council's life and work, made the long sea journey of 2,000 miles to be present on this occasion.

Pleasant Island, as it was formerly called, is not easy to find for its circumference is 12 miles. Europeans first came here in 1798 and a succession of beachcombers aggravated the internecine struggles of the peoples. The island was annexed by Germany in 1888 and included in her Marshall Islands Colony. The Christian Gospel was first preached to the Nauruans at the close of the 19th century by a Gilbertese Pastor named Tabwia. There was small resistance to the Word and the people rapidly made a nominal acceptance of the Christian faith. In the early days the work of evangelisation was sponsored by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, but in 1917 the responsibility was transferred to the London Missionary Society. A "fellow-worker" from the L.M.S. is still resident at Nauru.

The effects of World War I were but slightly felt on the island, for it was quickly occupied by Australian troops. The Second War developed a very different story. Between 1940 and 1942 Nauru was heavily bombarded from sea and sky by both Germans and Japanese. Then the Japanese forces were landed and remained in control until hostilities ended. During this period large numbers of able-bodied Nauruans were deported as forced labourers to the Caroline Islands and Truk. More than 300 died in captivity. When the island was reoccupied by Australian troops in 1945, it was found decimated and filthy. Remnants of crashed planes, battered gun-emplacements and semi-ruined buildings still remain as witnesses to the suffering of the Nauruans during World War II. The relative stability shown by the people during those years was

due in great part to their deep-rooted Christian convictions, and their loyal adherence to the worship and witness of the Church of Jesus Christ, even in exile and under enemy occupation.

Nauru is a Trust Territory under the United Nations Organisation for which responsibility is carried by the Australian Government. Since 1945 a noteworthy programme of rehabilitation has been carried by the British Phosphate Commissioners and the Administration. Materially the Nauruans are more prosperous and comfortable than at any previous time in their history. The people themselves are being encouraged to take an increasing measure of responsibility in political and Administration affairs, and they are quick to respond. About 50 young Nauruans, girls as well as boys, are receiving higher education in Australia, so that they may be fitted for positions of leadership in their own island.

Nauru's population is by no means wholly indigenous. Nauruans number something over 2,000, but the presence of some hundreds each of Europeans, Chinese, and Gilbert and Ellice Islanders gives this 8½ square miles of land a truly multi-racial community. There are strains and tensions at times, but on the whole this polyglot community is a happy one and Nauru can still with justice be called Pleasant Island. These people of other races and traditions are of course mainly concerned with the phosphate industry and some with government departments. All who are concerned with the well-being and development of the Nauruan are especially grateful for the Christian men who through the years have headed up the British Phosphate Commissioners' organisation. Outstanding among these were the late Sir Albert Ellis and the late Alfred Harold Gaze—one of Australian Congregationalism's most able, honoured and trusted laymen.

MORNING SERVICE, NAURU

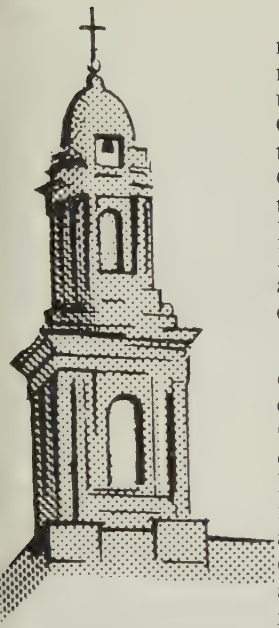
The Nauruan Protestant Church is really alive to its responsibilities in the Christian World Mission. Four years ago a young islander, trained at the Congregational College in Brisbane, Queensland, was sent out to join the team of South Seas missionaries serving with the London Missionary Society in Papua. The leaders of the Church Council are concerned lest in their isolation, the spiritual tone of the fellowship should deteriorate. It was at this point that there originated the approaches which led to the Nauruan Church Council's application for membership of the Congregational Union of Australia and New Zealand. At the ceremony of reception held in the Burwood Congregational Church, the Nauruan spokesman was the Rev. Itubwa Amram, L.Th., who was trained at Camden College, Sydney.

In the course of his address Mr. Amram said: "Today marks one of the historic occasions in the life and growth of the Nauruan Church. In June last year through and by the grace and will of God the Nauruan Church was able for the first time in her history to have one of her own men ordained for the ministry. Today, therefore, her reception into the Congregational Union of Australia and New Zealand adds further to the significance of the remarkable growth of this Church of God. The Union, we are convinced has been led by the Spirit of God to embrace this little one within its own life and to share with it the experiences necessary for her spiritual growth, which otherwise would not have been available to her. Already we can visualise the gate being opened for us to move into wider fields, and to share the life of other churches of whom we have not known except by hearsay.

"By being assimilated into this Union the Nauruan Church has now become a pioneer, thus opening the way for other churches in the Pacific, especially churches under the supervision of the London Missionary Society. It is our fervent hope and prayer that these our young sister churches may follow in our footsteps."

The Rev. Norman H. F. Cocks, after two pastorates in England, has served as London Missionary Society Secretary in Australia and New Zealand from 1945.

THE CITY TEMPLE



"City Temple Special!" was the cry of the newspaper boys in the City of London on the night of October 30, 1958. And it was an occasion unlike any other in the history of the Free Churches of England. For the rededication of this, the only Nonconformist church now in the City, took place in the presence of Her Majesty, the Queen Mother, the Bishop of London, the Dean of St. Paul's, the Lord Mayor of London, Dr. Lynn Harold Hough of the United States, and a distinguished company of the leaders of every Protestant denomination.

It is generally accepted that the first minister of the church now called the City Temple was the celebrated Thomas Goodwin, who as chaplain to Oliver Cromwell attended the Protector on his deathbed, and that his ministry to a group of Puritan Separatists began in 1640. But there is reason for believing that Goodwin's congregation may have been directly linked to the earliest Congregational church in London, which according to tradition met in the Plumbers' Hall in Anchor Lane.

The congregation had various homes from 1640—in such romantic sounding places as Crooked Lane, Paved Alley, Lime Street and Camomile Street. From 1819 to 1872 it worshipped in the Poultry Chapel, Cheapside. Then, flourishing beyond all expectation under the ministry of a young preacher named Joseph Parker, it was decided to build a great new church on Holborn Viaduct. It was a happy inspiration to call it the City Temple; and the Corporation recognised the long association of the church with the City of London by providing a stately pulpit.

Thus began the world-wide fame of the City Temple as a place of great preaching. Joseph Parker—leonine in appearance, both dramatic and humorous in speech, thundering out judgements on public affairs which were quoted throughout the country—was one of the greatest "characters" in the History of the Free Churches. His successor, Dr. R. J. Campbell, was in a different way a master of pulpit eloquence. During the First World War a gracious ministry was exercised by a preacher from the United States, Dr. Joseph Fort Newton, with whom was associated Dr. Maude Roydon, an Anglican laywoman of outstanding gifts and personality. Then came Dr. F. W. Norwood of

Australia, powerful in speech and modern in outlook. And in 1936 he was succeeded by the present minister, Dr. Leslie D. Weatherhead, a Methodist, too well known to need a descriptive word.

On the night of April 16th, 1941, the City Temple was almost totally destroyed in an air-raid. The congregation found many temporary homes in its period of exile—Anglican and Presbyterian as well as Congregational. When the decision to rebuild on the old site was firmly taken, there was a most generous response to the call for help. The United States was particularly represented, and thus continued a link with the church which runs back to the very beginning. For Thomas Goodwin, the first minister, was at one time invited to New England; his successor, Thomas Harrison, became chaplain to the Governor of Virginia; and the fifth minister, Nathanael Mather, was the son of Richard Mather who settled in New England in 1635, and made a distinguished contribution to Congregationalism there.

The new Temple holds about 1,400 worshippers, and it includes a high steep gallery. Unlike the old Temple, where the centrepiece was the great white pulpit, the focus is now upon the communion table approached by two levels of steps and set in an inner apse. Above it hangs a 12ft. cross, illuminated from behind, and higher still a lovely rose window in stained glass. Once again the City of London has given the pulpit which, circular in shape, is cantilevered out from the side of the sanctuary. Columns of cedar of Lebanon 40ft. high frame the whole.

Dr. Leslie D. Weatherhead, the Queen Mother and the Lord Mayor of London meet before the service

CONGREGATIONAL WOMEN

South Africa

The Annual Meetings of the Congregational Women's Federation of South Africa were held during October in Cape Town. The Forward Planning Scheme, in which for the past two or three years there has been waning interest, was renamed by Mrs. Ailsa Brown the "Women's Gift", as a token of the Federation's appreciation of all that was done for our delegates to Hartford by the women of the Congregational Churches in the U.S.A. The Women's Gift has adopted as its first project a new fund, inaugurated during the Congregational Assembly, which aims at raising as a matter of urgency the sum of £100,000 towards the cost of rebuilding those churches, schools and manses which will be moved under the Group Areas Act. The Federation handed over at once the sum of £600 from the old Forward Planning Scheme, and pledged itself to raise its gift to £1,000. The retiring President, Mrs. G. Abbott, then inducted Mrs. L. Heap of Pretoria as the new President.

England and Wales

Together with all Standing Committees of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, the Women's Committee has been considering "policy for the next ten years". At the Annual Meetings of the Federation of Congregational Women in October, which took the form of a two-day residential conference, much time was given to discussion on ways of closer integration with the total life and work of the Union, and in particular of more effective co-operation with the Life and Work, Youth and Education, and Men's Committees. The Rev. B. Reita Searle was inducted as President of the Federation for 1958-59.

New Zealand

Two important constitutional changes were approved at the Annual Meeting of the New Zealand Fellowship of Congregational Women, held in Wellington in October 1958, for adoption in October 1959:

(i) the merging into one group of the two women's organisations—the Women's Auxiliary of the London Missionary Society and the Fellowship of Congregational Women.

(ii) the formation of an Executive Committee with dominion-wide representation. In the past Executive responsibility was held by each district in turn.

Mrs. J. B. Chambers agreed to continue in office as President until the new Constitution becomes effective.

THE CUBE

An Experiment in Youth Group Planning

John Graff

The Joint National Council of youth representing the Evangelical and Reformed Church and the Congregational Christian Churches, held at Union-Seminary in New York City in the summer of 1958, was much more than just an historic coming together of the two fellowships for the purpose of merging into a new fellowship. It was a time of great experiment with new ideas and methods. Each of the two fellowships brought to the meeting a different background of experience in dealing with problems and in getting things done. By pooling these experiences we were able to test each method or idea, and thus to incorporate into the new fellowship the most successful features of each of the parent organisations.

One of the most unique experiments was in the area of group living and group planning. To facilitate the work of the Council and to insure the highest possible degree of active participation by all the members, we organised the Council on the basis of "cube" groups—a term and a concept borrowed from our E & R friends, who have used it with a good deal of success for a number of years.

The "cube" group method is nothing more than a breaking down of your group—be it large or small—into small groups of from five to ten persons of the same age group, interests, school class or similar "common denominator". It is in these small groups that initial discussion, planning and sharing take place. The advantages are quite apparent. Each person has the opportunity to identify himself with an informal group of his "peers". People are more apt to express their ideas in a small friendly group, and thus you get a more widespread sampling of opinion. In large groups, such as our Council was, the "cube" presents a chance to "break the ice" and get to know some people very well instead of leaving one to be just a face in the crowd. Since the groups are without formal leadership, the "cube" becomes an important instrument for encouraging and training leadership within the group.

The "cube" is not intended to do away entirely with the necessity or desire for large group activities. When the "cube" has thoroughly discussed a problem, it meets with the total group where the findings of all the groups are presented and talked over and final decisions are made. This might lead to the impression that the cube is just another term for the old discussion group technique. Such is not the case. The "cube" is actually the centre of the individual's group life. It is not only a place to plan and discuss programme. It is used for recreation, worship, Bible study and a host of other activities. It becomes in a sense the individual's

"family". Perhaps direct reference to the Union experience will better illustrate the role of "cubes" in the group process.

In preparing for the Joint Council we were faced with a great many problems, such as the size of the group (300), the geographical distribution of the delegates, wide age ranges, the two different denominational backgrounds, and a host of other such considerations. Our chief aim was to make the Council as warm and personal an experience as possible and to insure that all the delegates would contribute as much as possible from their individual backgrounds. To do this it was necessary to "tone down" aggressive leadership while at the same time encouraging the reluctant to participate.

Drawing from the E & R tradition, we divided the Council into 30 cube groups. Each delegate—officers and adult leaders included—was assigned to a cube group of ten or twelve persons. This group was their "base of operation" for the week. Discussion of all Council business first took place in the cube. Bible study and evening vespers were conducted in each group with responsibility for conducting them being passed around to each member. At various times during the week the whole Council would meet to hear reports from each cube, discuss the various proposals and take final action.

There were, of course, many opportunities also for participation in Council-wide activities. Formal worship services, meals, plenaries and social hours were held together. Yet the actual work of the Council was done at the level at which most of the delegates could actively participate and make a meaningful and constructive contribution.

A "Cube" in Action

In retrospect and after careful evaluation it seems that this experiment was highly successful. It is, of course, difficult to measure this success in concrete terms and we are not unaware of some weaknesses and shortcomings of the idea. Group co-ordinators are needed who will not lead the group but who can skillfully guide it to avoid domination of the group by one or two persons. Care must also be taken to provide a balance between this close fellowship and the opportunity for fellowship on a larger scale. The small group experience can be an unhappy one for individuals who, for some reason, are unable to adjust to their group.

In spite of these hazards, it appears that the success of the Union Council was due in no small part to the manner in which the delegates were able to enter into the real job at hand, find a significant role in the overall programme and adapt quickly to the hectic and unfamiliar Council atmosphere.

It is this kind of mutual sharing of traditions which has heightened our enthusiasm over the merger. It is truly thrilling to sense the spirit of love and co-operation which has marked our attempts to strengthen and extend our fellowship.

John Graff is the immediate past National President of Pilgrim Fellowship, the youth organization of the Congregational Christian Churches of the U.S.A., with a membership of 200,000 *young people from Junior High* (12-14) *and Senior High* (15-18) *age groups.*

"WORLD CONGREGATIONALISM"

The May issue will contain the following articles:

Congregationalism on the Continent of Europe by Glynmor John

The Next Ten Years in England and Wales

Congregationalism in Brazil

Round the World by Bert H. Parker

Rethinking Missions by Norman Goodall

Women in a Multi-Racial Country

From Samoa to California by E. Walter Smith

I.C.C. NEWS

"Proceedings"—Copies of the Report of the Eighth Assembly held in Hartford, Connecticut, last summer, are available from the office of the Council for 15/6 or $2.50. It contains all the major addresses, the minutes of the business sessions, list of the delegates and some attractive pictures.

Executive Committee—The Rev. A. M. van Peski has been appointed to the Executive Committee by the Remonstrant Brotherhood. Lately minister to the Remonstrant congregation in Fridrichstadt in Schleswig-Holstein, he is now pastor in Groningen.

We deeply regret the loss from the Committee of the Rev. C. Denis Ryan, whose untimely death we report elsewhere.

Reformed Alliance—Following the decision taken at Hartford, a small committee representative of the Council will be meeting this January with a like number from the Reformed Alliance to consider the range of discussion between us which both have warmly agreed. Our members will be Dr. John Marsh, the Rev. Glynmor John and the Secretary.

Protestantism in Latin Europe—A Conference of Protestant Churches in the Latin Countries of Europe was held in September in Le Chambon-sur-Lignon (Haute-Loire), France. By invitation the Council was represented by the Rev. Glynmor John who will report on this and on our Congregational concern on the Continent in the next issue of "World Congregationalism". The Conference was arranged by Dr. Howard Schomer who will be an honorary member of the continuation committee.

The "Gang"—With this title a meeting has been held once a month from October to May for many years in Memorial Hall for young people from overseas who are temporarily resident in or around London. Miss Dorothy Biggs arranges a programme of talks and discussions, tea and devotions, which has provided a most valued means of fellowship and continuing friendships. We have young people from Australia, New Zealand, Samoa, South Africa, Holland, Germany, Madagascar, Sweden, Jamaica, British Guiana, Canada and the United States as well as some from England in the "Gang". This year we have had talks about Hartford and about a Youth Group visit to France and Switzerland arranged by the I.C.C., as well as a Christmas social.

Group Visits—Plans are in hand for Youth Groups to exchange between England, Germany and Sweden this year. And there will be a Women's Fellowship Tour from the United States to Great Britain and the Continent in the autumn.

Pastoral Exchanges—The I.C.C. office is very happy to accept responsibility for putting ministers and churches in touch with a view to these most profitable exchanges. Contact in the United States should be first made with the Rev. Nathanael Guptill at 287 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N.Y.; in Great Britain with the office of the I.C.C.

THE CONGREGATIONAL WORLD

Australia—The death of the Rev. C. Denis Ryan, B.A., recently appointed first full-time Secretary of the Congregational Union of Australia and New Zealand, has caused widespread sorrow. With considerable professional qualifications as a secretary before he entered the ministry, and with special experience of American church organization, his had seemed an ideal appointment when this office was formed in 1957. At that time, however, ill-health had already laid a hand on him. He refused to allow this to limit his work and in October went to New Zealand for the 75th anniversary celebrations of the Congregational Union. But he was not able to attend, being taken immediately to hospital where after some weeks he died. Prior to this office he had held pastorates in Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales.

Australia—New Youth Directors have been appointed—Rev. J. D. Gunson (Victoria); Mr. P. Sarre (South Australia); Rev. K. P. Braithwaite (Queensland).

New Zealand—The 75th Assembly of the Congregational Union was held in Wellington, the Thanksgiving Service being broadcast. The youth department was reorganized as the Congregational Youth Fellowship. The Fellowship of Congregational Women and the Women's Auxiliary of the London Missionary Society amalgamated their administrative offices. The Rev. M. H. Taylor, of Lower Hutt, took office as Chairman of the Union, and the Rev. J. Lloyd Gammon was elected his successor. A Basis of Union between Churches of Christ, Congregationalists, Methodists and Presbyterians is to be prepared for a vote in 1962.

England and Wales—The Council of the Union met in November and approved a plan for "The Next Ten Years". Seven study groups have been formed to rethink the life of the churches and of the Union and to make practical recommendations. This most significant step in the life of the churches for 50 years will be described more fully in the next issue.

England and Wales—In recent years more than 1,500 lay preachers have taken the Union's course of training: 170 sat the Union examinations in 1958: over 250 are at present under training. The need now is for 500 lay pastors—men and women who, whether they preach or not, are prepared to care for small churches pastorally. A course of training is being devised, and it is hoped to appoint someone to accept responsibility for the total service of lay people to the churches.

England and Wales—More than three-quarters of the ministers and churches have joined the superannuation scheme launched last summer.

England and Wales—The Rev. Margaret Knee has been appointed to the staff of the Youth and Education Department of the Union with special concern for children's work.

The Rev. John White, staff secretary for the Home Churches Fund and the Maintenance of the Ministry, has been nominated Moderator for the East Midland Province as from January, 1960.

Scotland—The Rev. W. B. J. Martin, minister of Augustine-Bristo church and staff writer to the "British Weekly", has been appointed Visiting Professor of Homiletics in the Federated Theological Faculty of the University of Chicago.

Canada—The United Church reports 2,591 charges in July, 1957, of which 1,901 had ministers, and 586 were otherwise supplied. The number of students in training was 700, which means that in about five years all churches should have ministers. Though 318 new charges have been formed since 1928, there are 400 fewer churches.

The Missionary and Maintenance objectives have been set at $7,000,000 for 1958, $8M for 1959, and $10M for 1960. The total of $47M raised by the churches in 1957 for all purposes compares with $12M in 1941. The minimum stipend has been fixed at $3,350, with manse and transportation allowance.

The 18th General Council at Ottawa appointed Dr. E. M. Aitken as Chairman of the Vacancies Committee; Dr. George Birtch as Chairman of the Board of Evangelism and Social Service; Rev. R. H. N. Davidson as Chairman of the Committee of Church Worship and Ritual; the Very Rev. Dr. James S. Thomson as Chairman of the Overseas Missions Board.

United States—Dr. Alfred Carleton, executive vice president of the American Board, has been named chairman of the newly created Commission on Religious Liberty of the World Council of Churches.

United States—On October 5 the first new United Church of Christ in America was organized in Greensboro, N.C.

United States—The Rev. Dr. Harry T. Stock, general secretary of the Division of Christian Education, died in August last. He had held this post for twenty years.

United States—The Rev. Dr. David M. Stowe, educational secretary of the American Board has been named secretary of a newly created Commission on Theology of the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council. The 25-member commission is composed of theologians of all Protestant denominations and will undertake a "deep reconsideration of the present expressions of the traditional missionary enterprise" in the light of new obstacles and new opportunities.

South Africa—Despite the increasingly strained race-relationships in secular life the Congregational Union of South Africa reported a record Assembly in 1958 in respect of numbers, and one notable for its spirit of optimism and of harmony and manifest goodwill between the three racial groups (African, Coloured and European).

A major issue was that presented by the tremendous financial burden imposed on the African and Coloured Churches by the Government's apartheid legislation. The moving of population (itself involving heavy loss to the families uprooted) means the selling of churches, schools and manses for practically nothing and then rebuilding at modern heavy costs. A rough survey has revealed that rebuilding costs may total £500,000. Assembly set up a committee to seek a plan to raise £100,000. For a Union with less than 5,000 European members this is a task indeed.

There has been a marked extension of the European churches in the last two years. No new churches had been built since 1931. Now three causes have been formed in Johannesburg, one in Durban, one in Cape Town, and one in Southern Rhodesia. Three more are projected in the Johannesburg area. And there are more European candidates for the ministry in training than ever before. And the contributions from the churches to the Union constitute an all-time record. Sursum corda!

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